

"The Vitality of the Reformation Today" conference set for August 10-12 in St. Paul

MEMBERSHIP IN THE KARL BARTH SOCIETY

All who are interested are invited to join the Karl Barth Society of North America.

To become a member, send your name, address, and annual dues of \$15.00 (\$10.00 for students) payable to "Karl Barth Society" to:

Professor Russell Palmer
Dept. of Philosophy and Religion
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Omaha, NE 68182-0265

Members whose dues were last paid more than a year ago are urged to send in their annual renewal.

An Apology

The Editor wishes to apologize for the delay in the appearance of this issue of the Newsletter. I have gone through a divorce and moved twice within the last year, and my mind has not been as focused on my professional tasks as it should have been. I intend to maintain a more regular publication schedule in the future.

My goal is to have a minimum of three issues a year. Expansion to a quarterly publication would be ideal, provided that sufficient news items, articles, book reviews, etc., can be obtained. Those interested in contributing such are invited to contact the Editor.

KD on CD-ROM

For readers who may have missed the announcement in a previous issue of the Newsletter, Bengt Rasmusson of KAB Konsult in Sweden has informed us that the entire *Kirchliche Dogmatik* is now available on CD-ROM. Further information can be found on the KAB Konsult home page:

<http://www.kabkonsult.se>

"The Vitality of the Reformation Today—*Lutheran and Reformed Reflections in Conversation with Karl Barth*" is the theme of a conference to be held this summer under the joint sponsorship of the Karl Barth Society of North America and a number of other groups.

Growing out of the recent Formula of Agreement between Lutheran and Reformed denominations in the United States, the conference on the campus of Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota, will run from Monday afternoon, August 10, through Wednesday noon, August 12. Presentations will be made by eight theologians representing the Lutheran and Reformed traditions.

Conference Director Wayne Stumme has arranged this summer's conference in response to the action of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Reformed Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the United Church of Christ to enter into "covenant communion" with one another.

In recent years Stumme, now retired from directing the ELCA Institute for Mission in the U.S.A. and teaching at Trinity Lutheran Seminary, has brought together Lutheran and Barthian theologians in a series of conferences to explore the significance of Barth's theology for the ministry of the church.

Included on the program will be a presentation by George Hunsinger, Director of the Center for Barth Studies at Princeton Theological Seminary, who will report on the activity of the CBS during its first year of operation and its plans for the future.

Registration information may be found in the conference brochure, which is included with this issue of the Newsletter. If the brochure is missing, please contact:

Institute for Mission in the U.S.A.
Trinity Lutheran Seminary
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Barth Society program held at 1997 AAR/SBL Annual Meeting in San Francisco

In San Francisco last November, the Karl Barth Society sponsored a program immediately preceding the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature. Sessions were held on Friday and Saturday, November 22 and 23. Both sessions were well attended.

The Friday afternoon program began with a presentation on "Religion and the Religions in the Theology of Karl Barth" by Joseph DiNoia, O.P. (Dominican House of Studies, Washington, D.C.).

Fr. DiNoia first discussed the treatment of religion in *Church Dogmatics* §17, where Barth speaks of the *Aufhebung* of religion—not the "abolition" of religion but its "sublation" (involving both dissolution and elevation). Barth does not here offer a full theory of the relation between religions and religion. He has Christianity chiefly in view, and he is attacking the practice of making human religiosity the context for theology.

DiNoia pointed out that natural religion began with a modest role in classical theology (e.g. Aquinas), but later embarked on an independent career. He thinks that Barth's critique of this development is congruent with a possible Thomistic critique. (He suggested that Barth's criticism of Roman Catholic theology is often wrong, but in interesting ways!)

Turning to *Church Dogmatics* §69, DiNoia called attention to some of Barth's remarkable statements about the possibility that Christ (the one Light) may speak through the many other lights. Therefore Christians need to be open to that possibility, without surrendering the uniqueness of Christ. He contrasted Barth's attitude with some current versions of "pluralism" which reinterpret the religions in terms other than those in which they present themselves—a form of tolerance which he finds patronizing.

The second presentation was by Gerhard Sauter (Ecumenical Institute, University of Bonn), who spoke on the question: "Why Isn't Barth's 'Church Dogmatics' a 'Theology of Hope'?"

At the Saturday morning session, Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger (Princeton Seminary) spoke about her recent book *Theology and Pastoral Counseling: A New Interdisciplinary Approach* (Eerdmans).

She recounted her experience of being captivated by Jung as an undergraduate, and then encountering Barth in seminary. As a practicing pastoral counselor, she was troubled by the split between theological and

psychological perspectives and sought a way to relate them appropriately.

A comment by Hans Frei turned out to provide a liberating insight, to the effect that theology and culture remain logically diverse even when they are existentially connected in the same person. In spite of their coexistence in a single individual, their logical diversity means that they cannot be coordinated systematically. It is as though she were bilingual—using both frameworks but recognizing that they cannot be integrated conceptually into a single system.

She found a helpful way of developing Frei's insight by appropriating a concept suggested by her husband, George Hunsinger, in his book *How to Read Karl Barth*. Taking his cue from Chalcedonian Christology, George Hunsinger identifies a formal pattern which has other theological applications. Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger makes use of this notion (the purely formal "Chalcedonian pattern," not the Christological definition itself) in suggesting ways of relating theological perspectives and psychological wisdom in pastoral counseling without confusing the two.

The first respondent was Clifford Green (Hartford Seminary), who commended Hunsinger for her truly pastoral approach and for her contribution to the wider issue of how the theology of Karl Barth relates to culture, which he called a seriously unexplored dimension of Barth studies. Hunsinger's work is an example of the fruitfulness of Barth's kind of theology as a dialogue partner with other disciplines.

Green then went on to raise three questions about her approach. First, how does the normative role of theology affect the choice of psychological theories to work with? Hunsinger finds "object relations" psychology congenial, but are other psychologies as congruent with a theological perspective?

A second question had to do with the status of Jung. Green noted the popularity of Jung's thought among religious people especially and expressed misgivings about this. He sees Jungian psychology as deconstructing Christian theology and making it just another illustration of the Jungian system. He thinks Hunsinger is too soft on Jung. If Jung himself is ambiguous, as she claims, the ambiguity evaporates in his disciples. Jung's agenda, in Green's view, is to overthrow Christianity and replace it with his own psychological metaphysic.

In the third place, Green asked about the relation between intra-psychic and social-political dynamics. He pointed out that families do not live in a social vacuum. How are public realities connected with personal-psychological dynamics?

The other respondent was Kathryn Green-McCreight (Yale). She noted that Hunsinger's work has a significance broader than the field of pastoral

counseling. On the other hand, she expressed discomfort with the concept of the "Chalcedonian pattern," wondering whether its use does justice to the uniqueness of the person of Christ. Finally, Green-McCreight sought further clarification of Hunsinger's view of the relation between faith and psychological health in general.

In her response, Hunsinger pointed to the way Barth deals with the "phenomena of the human" (in contrast to a speculative theory of humanity) in *Church Dogmatics* III/2. She suggested that while Jungians develop Jung's thought into a worldview which becomes an ideology in an Eriksonian sense, she prefers to take Jung more modestly as providing some valuable insights into the "phenomena of the human." She contrasted her appropriation of Jung with the use currently being made of Jung in the church, in connection with which she suggested the need for a strong polemic against it. She mentioned that Jung, object relations psychology, and family systems theory are the three approaches she principally uses in her own work as a counselor.

In the subsequent discussion, Bruce McCormack (Princeton Seminary) questioned the notion of the Chalcedonian pattern, on the ground that Chalcedon points to a unique reality (the hypostatic union), and to treat it simply as a set of rules for thinking is problematic. On another point, he suggested that our true identity (our "transcendental self") is constituted by our election to be God's covenant partners.

KBS program planned for 1998 AAR/SBL

Again this year, the Barth Society will present a program in conjunction with the AAR/SBL Annual Meeting. The dates for the 1998 Annual Meeting in Orlando are November 21-24, so the KBS sessions will be held **Friday afternoon, November 20**, and **Saturday morning, November 21**.

Walter Lowe (Emory University) is currently working on putting the program together. Further details will be announced in the Fall 1998 issue of the Newsletter.

Karl Barth Archiv publication to appear in English

It has been announced that the next issue of the newsletter of the Karl Barth Archiv in Basel is to be published entirely in English. Copies of this issue are being made available for distribution to readers of the Karl Barth Society Newsletter.

We had hoped to include this special issue with this mailing, but it has not yet arrived. We will either send it out under separate cover this summer, or include it with the next issue.

Music and theology in Barth

A note from David J. R. S. Moseley, who is currently teaching at the University of San Diego, informs us that he is working on a Ph.D. dissertation at Cambridge University examining the intersection of music and theology in Barth's *Dogmatics*.

"More precisely," he writes, "I am attempting to unravel the 'extra-ecclesial truth' and 'parables of the kingdom' passages in *C.D.* IV/3(2) §69.2, cross-referencing these texts to the 1956 Mozart Bicentenary journalism and "The Humanity of God" (1956), which both use similar vocabulary; and also to the wider issues of knowledge of God (*C.D.* II/1) and that old chestnut, natural theology."

He hopes to be able to submit his thesis sometime in 1999.

NOTE: The Barth Society Newsletter is glad to publish such reports of research in progress.

Materials for the Newsletter are always welcome. Please send comments, brief articles, news items, reviews or book notices, etc., to the Editor:

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Request for information

It has been suggested that readers of the Newsletter might be interested in learning about matters such as the following:

- activities of Barth study groups in various places;
- ideas for using Barth's theology as a resource for sermon preparation;
- ideas for teaching Barth's theology in a classroom setting (undergraduate or graduate).

Those who have experience with things of this sort are encouraged to send reports or suggestions to the Editor at the address above.

